

ABSTRACT

In a 2008 interview, Pira Canning Sudham said:

Buddhism is a vein that runs through all of my writings as much as the belief in karma does. ('Interview' 101).

- (1) A Buddhist belief is that existence is marked by transitoriness and flux.
- (2) Another Buddhist belief is in the force of karma, or the determination of one's existence on the basis of past moral actions.

This thesis investigates the influence of these two beliefs in the writings of Pira Canning Sudham.

Firstly, the developing of an early story by Pira Sudham ('A Food Vendor and a Taxi Driver') into a later story by Pira Canning Sudham ('Exiles in the Kingdom') is investigated. It is suggested that the process of development may be termed a 'story stream'. Secondly, the developing of an earlier novel by Pira Sudham (*Monsoon Country*) into a later novel by Pira Canning Sudham (*Shadowed Country*) is examined.

Thirdly, this thesis considers the representation and manifestation of flux in the writings of Pira Sudham. Flux is discussed with reference to 'influence' and, more narrowly, 'control'. Influence is understood as the 'flowing' of something, whether patterns of light or sound or electrical pulses, and this 'flowing' is 'into' or 'through' something. It is because of this 'flowing into' and this 'flowing from', because of this 'being influenced' and this 'influencing', that something is in flux.

Control is viewed as a narrow form of influence; control is a form of influence qualified by means of *intention*. If (an) action results from intentional causes (relative to the action), the action is ‘controlled’; if (an) action results from unintentional causes (relative to the action), the action is merely ‘influenced’ (in the more general sense of the word, above) by those causes. Control, in this thesis, is considered both the assertion and the defining aspect of power. Power, in other words, is the ability to control.

Following Buddhism, control, or the exertion of power, may be either moral or immoral. Whether power is exerted morally depends on how it is exerted and for what ends. If power is exerted gently, in aid of (or without aiming to do harm, either bodily or mental, to) a living being, it is moral. If power is exerted aggressively, or to harm a living being, it is immoral.

Fourthly, Buddhism is considered in reference to politics. It is argued that Prem as a Buddhist develops from associating Buddhism with obedience as a youth, to managing to find some sort of semantic overflow between Buddhist ethics and involvement in politics as an adult.

Also, the final sections of the first and second chapters look at how the writings of Pira Sudham refer to their environment.